

CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES
March 25, 2003
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

The meeting of the California High-Speed Rail Authority was called to order on March 25 at 10:00 a.m. at the San Diego Association of Governments Board Room, San Diego.

Members Present: Rod Diridon, Sr., Chairperson
 Fran Florez, Vice Chairperson
 Dr. Ernest A. Bates
 Bob Giroux
 Joseph E. Petrillo

Members Absent: Jerry Epstein, Vice Chairperson
 William E. Leonard
 T.J. Stapleton
 Leland Wong

Members Reports

Chairperson Diridon welcomed the newest member of the Authority, Mr. Bob Giroux. Member Giroux was appointed by the Senate Rules Committee. Member Giroux is the Senior Advisor to the Honorable John Burton, President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

Public Comment

Pam Slater, San Diego County Supervisor welcomed the Authority to San Diego. Supervisor Slater commended the Authority, Caltrans Rail Division staff and consultants on an excellent job in working with the many jurisdictions within the Los Angeles-Orange County-San Diego (LOSSAN) corridor to build consensus for a high-speed rail project. She stated that it has been difficult at times because some communities had expressed opposition to the project. However, the Authority staff and Caltrans staff have identified alternatives to help address the concerns of the individual communities. Currently, many communities that were previously opposed to the project are no longer opposed to the project. Supervisor Slater asked the Board to pursue the alternatives brought forward by the Authority and Caltrans staff, consultants, and the communities.

Chairperson Diridon reported that he traveled to Washington, D.C. two weeks ago and discussed the high-speed rail project with several Legislators. Chairperson Diridon mentioned that the National High-Speed Ground Transportation Association (HSGTA) is a national trade organization that lobbies in favor of high-speed rail in Washington, D.C. The HSGTA annual conference will be in Anaheim, May 12-15, 2003. Chairperson Diridon stated that those interested in the conference they may contact him or Stan Feinstod of Systra for more information.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Mehdi Morshed reported that the consultants' work is progressing as planned, and should therefore have the draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) produced in August 2003 then the final EIR/EIS would be expected towards the end of the year.

Authority staff and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) staff met with the federal cooperating agencies. The role of the federal cooperating agencies is to consult with the FRA and the Authority and provide input for the preparation of the draft EIR/EIS. The cooperating agencies have submitted comments to help in the Authority's work.

Executive Director Morshed reported that he met with the California Department of Finance (DOF) and Caltrans regarding the Governor's 2003-04 proposed budget. The Governor strongly supports the high-speed rail project and would like to provide all that is necessary for the timely implementation of the project. At the same time, resources are scarce and the State is facing a difficult financial situation. We are currently discussing an alternative proposal that includes the \$1.25 million federal funds that requires a state match.

Executive Director Morshed reported that prior to finalizing the recommendations for the LOSSAN corridor, he met with the Mayor and members of the City Council of San Clemente, as well as the Mayor of San Juan Capistrano.

Executive Director Morshed reported that the release of a newsletter has been delayed because the Authority has been unable to execute the outreach contract. Upon contract execution, the work on the newsletter and other outreach issues will continue.

Los Angeles-Orange County-San Diego (LOSSAN) Screening Recommendations

Deputy Director Dan Leavitt presented recommendations and the supporting technical data for eliminating some of the conventional rail design options at key locations along the LOSSAN corridor. A copy of this presentation is available upon request.

Public Comment

Stephanie Dorey, Mayor of San Clemente & Co-Chair, South Orange County Rail Working Group (SOCRWG)

Mayor Dorey thanked Authority staff for listening to the community. She stated the community has a keen interest in preserving its natural and historical resources. The SOCRWG feels there is a need for rail transportation that works. SOCRWG's mission statement is to support and promote integrated rail-based long range mobility planning that recognizes, preserves and protects national, state and local coastal and historic resources of the region. Mayor Dorey expressed support for the long split tunnel alternative. Mayor Dorey expressed support for the elimination of the coastal alignment, stating that this could be a "win" for the community, and a "win" for the environment and a "win" for better transportation for the state of California.

Susan Ritschel, Vice-Mayor, City of San Clemente & Co-Chair of SOCRWG

Vice-Mayor Ritschel applauded the staff for listening to the concerns of the San Clemente, San Juan Capistrano and Dana Point communities. Vice-Mayor Ritschel expressed support for the elimination of the coastal alignment through San Clemente and the elimination of the downtown alignment through San Juan Capistrano. She encouraged the Board to support the staff recommendations. SOCRWG supports the long split tunnel alternative with a station at Avenida Pico in San Clemente, SOCRWG does not support the short tunnel alternative due to its impacts on the City of Dana Point and the coastal areas. Vice Mayor Ritschel expressed support for the proposed Strategic Plan timeline, pending the Board's approval of staff screening recommendations. This timeline calls for the start of engineering and environment work on this portion of the corridor within 1-3 years. Vice-Mayor Ritschel thanked the Authority for the leadership in addressing community concern and taking this important step toward a

transportation solution that is a positive for the environment, communities and for future rail service within the region.

Christopher Evans, Executive Director, Surfrider Foundation

Mr. Evans represents the Chapter Chair of the San Clemente Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation. Mr. Evans expressed appreciation for the Authority's work as it is good for the environment. Mr. Evans reported that the Surfrider National office, Board of Directors and 37,000 activists in this country are fully behind the comments of the San Clemente City Council. Mr. Evans expressed support for the elimination of the coastal route. He stated that any coastal alignment would have biological and water quality effects, safety effects, viewscape, soundscape and coastal erosion effects. He submitted an executive summary of the Surfrider's State of the Beach report. Mr. Evans thanked the Authority and its staff for its work.

Lori Pfeiler, Mayor of Escondido & Chair of SANDAG High-Speed Rail Task Force

Mayor Pfeiler expressed support of the Authority's work. She stated that maintaining the I-15 corridor improvements are critical to provide the complete a transportation system. Mayor Pfeiler expressed appreciation for Deputy Director Leavitt's work. She expressed support for the identified alternatives and stated the alternatives are also supported by the region.

Joe Kellejian, Councilmember, City of Solana Beach; Member of SANDAG High-Speed Rail Task Force; SANDAG Transportation Committee Chair and LOSSAN Board of Directors

Mr. Kellejian expressed support for the Encinitas short trench improvements and the City of Del Mar tunneling, which would get rail off the coastline. Mr. Kellejian requested more information on the Penasquitos Lagoon.

Bill Michalsky, Del Mar Lagoon Committee

Mr. Michalsky expressed support for the Del Mar screening options. He expressed concern over the remaining options, stating the challenges will be mostly political. The screening options introduce new concerns. The twin tunnels alternative would only impact existing right-of-way. The north and south portals alternative is of considerable concern as we don't understand how they will impact the community or through-traffic. Impacts during construction need to be more clearly understood. The I-5 option brings other concerns as it certainly may benefit one lagoon at the expense of another lagoon. This alternative goes through a residential community. Therefore, please consider a sweeping curve across the 22nd District Agricultural Association (DAA) Property as an option then proceeding across the lagoon. One might also want to consider Southern Cal Edison beginning a mitigation of the San Dieguito Lagoon.

Shohreh Dupuis, Orange County Transportation Authority

Ms. Dupuis complimented Deputy Director Leavitt, Authority staff, consultants and Caltrans Rail Division staff addressing Orange County's concerns. She stated that OCTA supports the screening recommendations and the elimination of the coastal alignment options. Ms. Dupuis urged the Board to approve the staff recommendations. Ms. Dupuis urged the Board to approve staff recommendations.

Doug Chotkevys, City Manager, City of Dana Point

Mr. Chotkevys recognized Executive Director Morshed and Deputy Director Leavitt for their direct involvement with the three cities, Dana Point, San Juan Capistrano and San Clemente coming to a consensus. The long-split tunnel is the preferred choice. The short tunnel has disastrous implications to the city of Dana Point. Mr. Chotkevys stated if the curve through Dana Point was realigned it would end up in a future desalinization plant. Mr. Chotkevys expressed support for the elimination of the short tunnel option.

Development of a “Strategic Plan” for LOSSAN Corridor Improvements

Deputy Director Dan Leavitt gave an overview of the “Strategic Plan”. Deputy Director Leavitt introduced Mr. Steve Schibuola, Project Manager. Mr. Schibuola presented the components and timeline for the development of a “Strategic Plan” for potential conventional rail improvements in the LOSSAN corridor, which is being developed in partnership with the FRA and the Caltrans.

Chairperson Diridon reported that the Mineta Transportation Group is coordinating two public symposia on high-speed rail in California. The Common Wealth Club of California and the Los Angeles Town Hall Group are joining the Mineta Institute to conduct the two symposia. The symposia will provide opportunities for public discussion of high-speed rail.

Public Comment

Jim Swofford, Mineta Transportation Institute

Mr. Swofford stated he is representing Trixie Johnson, the Institute Research Director of Mineta Transportation Institute (Mineta Transportation). He stated that the Mineta Transportation is working with the Town Hall in Los Angeles and the Common Wealth Club in the San Francisco area to encourage extensive participation in the symposia by Mineta Transportation. The symposia will produce educational documents, proceedings, potential future case studies and information for the broadcast media. Mineta Transportation will be respectfully requesting information and assistance from Authority staff in developing the symposia. The proposed time frame for the symposia is toward the end of June.

Approval of Minutes for February 25, 2003 Meeting

Chairperson Diridon presented the minutes for approval. Member Bates moved to approve the February 25, 2003 meeting minutes. Vice Chairperson Florez seconded the motion, which carried 5-0.

Authority Members’ Meetings for Compensation

Chairperson Diridon presented the list of meetings for compensation for approval. Member Bates moved to approve the list of meetings for compensation. Vice Chairperson Florez seconded the motion, which carried, 5-0.

Identification of Date and Location of Next Meeting

The next Authority Board meeting is scheduled on April 22, 2003 in Oakland, CA.

Public Comment

Dan Hearn, President of the Intelligence Reconnaissance Fund

Mr. Hearn declared this meeting to be heartwarming. He thanked all involved for making high-speed rail a reality in California.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.